

REMARKS

By this amendment, claim 32 has been cancelled, claims 16, 18, 29, 31 and 37 have been amended, and claims 39 and 40 have been added. Thus, claims 14-31 and 33-40 are now active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

At the top of page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner kindly indicated that claims 14, 15, 17, 21-26, 28, 30, 33-35 and 38 are allowed, and also that claims 16, 18-20, 29 and 37 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In addition, in telephone conferences with the Examiner on or about January 10, 2007, the Examiner informed Applicants' undersigned attorney that claim 31 would also be allowable if amended as set forth herein.

Accordingly, in order to expedite allowance of this application, each of claims 16, 18, 29 and 37 has been amended to incorporate therein all of the limitations previously set forth in claim 31. Therefore, these claims are allowable in view of the indication of allowability set forth at the top of page 3 of the Office Action. In addition, claim 31 has been amended in accordance with the agreement with the Examiner as mentioned above and, accordingly, it is submitted that claim 31 is also allowable over the prior art.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that each of the independent claims 14, 16, 18, 29, 31 and 37 and the claims depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record. Claim 32 has been cancelled, thereby rendering moot the rejection thereof.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenichi HASHIMOTO et al.

By: 

Charles R. Watts

Registration No. 33,142

Attorney for Applicants

CRW/asd
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
April 26, 2007